

Senate Committee on Health Care
2025 Oregon Legislative Session

I am writing to you to voice my strong support for SB 597 that if passed would direct the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to establish a grant program to provide financial support to certified dental sealant programs that promote and engage in oral health care coordination activities.

I find this especially important considering that many counties in Oregon do not have fluoridated water and it is often apparent to myself, as a practicing hygienist, which patients have grown up in Oregon, and which have not, simply based on their decay rate.

To echo the sentiment of the ODHA Advocacy director, many children who receive oral health assessments and dental sealants through OHA certified programs require follow-up dental care. Oral health care coordination activities can help these children to receive the follow-up dental care that they need from dental providers in their community. Care coordination reduces barriers to care, increases access particularly for underserved children and improves overall health outcomes.

This grant program will help create a seamless connection between school oral health care, coordinated oral health care and private dental care, contributing to a strengthening of the overall health care system. Oral health care coordination can help keep children out of the emergency room by connecting them to a dental home in their community, helping to prevent children from “falling through the cracks” in Oregon.

I urge you to move SB 597 to the Senate with a do pass recommendation.

Heidi M. Klobes RDH, M.Ed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi M. Klobes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "H" and "K".